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Department of Corporate Services

*Ake*

*Durham*

File A-1300

January 26, 2001

RECEIVED  
JAN 31 2001

Rita Caldarone  
Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation  
77 Bloor Street West  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2R9

Re: City of Oshawa By-law 4-2001

Pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, enclosed for your records is a copy of By-law 4-2001, passed by City Council on January 15, 2001, which designates the "Regent Theatre" as being of architectural and historical interest.

If you need further information, please contact me at the address below, or by phone at (905) 436-5639.

Sandra Kranc  
Acting City Clerk

SK/jw

Enclosure

- c. Ontario Heritage Foundation, 10 Adelaide Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 1J3 ✓  
Heritage Oshawa  
T.W. Goodchild, Commissioner, Department of Development Services

✓  
*RC*

being a by-law to designate the property known as the "Regent Theatre", located at 44-50 King Street East, as being of architectural and historical interest pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18.

Recitals:

1. Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18 (the "Act"), authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and structures on it, to be of architectural or historic value or interest.
2. 870682 Ontario Limited (the "Owner") is the registered owner of property situated at 44-50 King Street East within Oshawa (the "Property"). The Property contains a building which was constructed in 1919 and was a theatre serving the City's downtown from October of 1919 for many years thereafter.
3. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000, The Corporation of the City of Oshawa (the "City") received a request from Heritage Oshawa, the City's Local and Architectural Advisory Committee ("Heritage Oshawa") under the Act, to designate the Property pursuant to Part IV of the Act.
4. The Corporation of the City of Oshawa provided notice to the Owner and to the Ontario Heritage Foundation that it intended to designate this property under the Act on May 10, 2000.
5. Notice of intention to designate this property was published in the *Oshawa This Week* newspaper (which has general circulation in the City of Oshawa) on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2000.
6. A notice of objection to the proposed designation was served by the Owner on the City Clerk on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2000. The Conservation Review Board held a hearing under the Act with respect to the Property on November 2, 2000.
7. The Conservation Review Board issued its report on January 2, 2001, recommending to the City that it designate the Property for all of the reasons put forward by Heritage Oshawa.
8. The City's Council considered the report of the Conservation Review Board on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and has concurred that the Property should be designated for all of the reasons put forward by Heritage Oshawa.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED AND IT IS HEREBY ENACTED as a by-law of The Corporation of the City of Oshawa, by its Council, as follows:

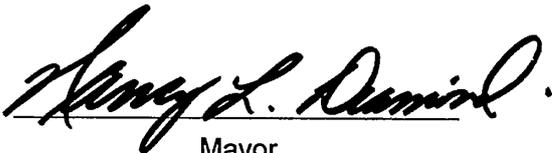
1. The Property, including all facilities, features and structures on it which are described in Schedule "A" to this By-law, located at 44-50 King Street East, more particularly described as:

Lot 4, North side of King Street and Lot 4, South side of Bond Street, Plan H-50003, City of Oshawa, Regional Municipality of Durham, as set out in Instrument No. D335181;

is hereby designated as being of architectural and historical interest.

2. The reasons for designation of this property under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, are set out in Schedule "A" to this by-law. Schedule "A" forms an integral part of this by-law.
3. A copy of this by-law shall be registered against the property described above in the Land Registry and Land Titles Offices for the Land Registry Division of Whitby (No. 40).
4. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to serve a copy of this by-law on the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to publish notice of the passing of this by-law in the *Oshawa This Week* newspaper.

By-law read a first, second and third time and finally passed this fifteenth day of January, 2001.

  
Mayor

  
City Clerk

Schedule "A" to By-law 4-2001  
Of The Corporation of the City of Oshawa

Reasons for Designation of the Regent Theatre

OSHAWA REGENT THEATRE  
46 -50 King Street East.



Prepared for Heritage Oshawa by:  
Regan Hutcheson  
based in part on research conducted  
by Dan Grandovec and  
Rose Mary Mason

### Architectural Reasons for Designation

The Regent Theatre was constructed in 1919 by Norman McLeod Ltd, at a cost of \$100,000. The King Street facade of the theatre was modelled on Georgian architectural lines and as such the architectural features are very symmetrical. The building is one of the few remaining examples in Oshawa of this classically inspired architectural style.

As initially constructed, the building featured three main components on its front facade: the theatre entrance in the middle with a traditional commercial storefront on either side. The first Regent Theatre sign was vertical in design and was suspended from a bracket mechanism on the roof. Below the sign was a square canopy suspended from the front wall by chains (the wall hooks still remain). The original canopy and sign were replaced c.1950 by a substantial Famous Players movie theatre marquee that allowed films to be advertised using large metal letters. The marquee was removed in the 1990s. Originally, on either side of theatre entrance were round arched display windows used to advertise attractions (still in existence under current cladding). Located above each original storefront were two sets of elongated casement windows each with eight panes of glass and decorative bottom panel (these have since been replaced by 1/1 windows). The name "Regent Theatre" was inscribed in the frieze above the central arcade and still exists today.

The building's framing is built entirely of steel including the ceiling structure. The theatre also has a domed roof. The exterior of the building is clad in red brick which has been painted on the front facade. The exterior treatment of the lower portion of the front facade has been altered a number of times, but some original features still remain buried under the current treatment. The original brick gave way to a black tile with turquoise trim (1950-60s) which was removed and replaced by a stone/pebble treatment (c.1970s). Recently, the lower portion of the front facade has been parged and painted.

The upper portion of the front facade has many of its original details intact albeit under a coat of paint. There is a classically inspired frieze complete with egg and dart moulding, pilasters with

together and surrounded by a larger ring around the curve of the dome. The entire perimeter of the auditorium is decorated with a rope like moulding and the vents in each corner of the auditorium are detailed with similar plaster ornamentation that compliments the entire ceiling. The only original decorative element to survive on the walls is the columns and detailing at the top and base of the walls.

The exterior and interior of the Regent Theatre are well documented in archival postcards and photographs, as well as in a substantial number of professionally taken photographs detailing all aspects of the building (sponsored by the Oshawa Historical Society when the theatre ceased operations).

### **Statement of Reasons for Designation**

The Regent Theatre is recommended for designation pursuant to Part 4 of the Ontario Heritage Act due to its historical and architectural significance.

#### Historical Reasons for Designation

The construction of the Regent Theatre began in March 1919 and opening night was October 16, 1919. The opening performance was "The Prince Chap" starring Thomas Meighan and a Mack Sennett comedy entitled "You Wouldn't Believe It!" accompanied by a special orchestra which was personally directed by Jack Arthur. The building was designed by J. McNee Jeffrey, a famous Canadian theatre designer, and was officially opened by Oshawa Mayor John Stacey. In attendance were N.L. Nathanson Managing Director, H.M. Thomas General Manager and George Barrows secretary-treasurer of the Famous Players theatre chain which commissioned the theatre's construction. It was reported that a capacity audience attended and hundreds were turned away.

It was reported in 1927, that the annual attendance at the theatre during the past fiscal year had reached over half a million people. As part of the Canadian Famous Player's chain for most of its existence, the theatre obtained many of the best offerings of the film world. The Oshawa Daily Reformer in 1927 reported the following:

"Representing investment resources of half a million dollars, the Regent Theatre in Oshawa stands as a living memorial to its community spirit, and as one of the finest moving picture theatres in Canada. That it is the handsomest structures of its kind between Toronto and Montreal is witnessed by official statistics"

The theatre was constructed with many unique and innovative features for its time including an original air conditioning system which consisted of fans blowing air over blocks of ice placed in racks. This was replaced in the late 1920's with a system that had cold water pumped through the building to provide a cooler atmosphere in the summer. The Regent was also the first theatre in Oshawa to offer perfect vision to its 1,100 patrons. It was also reported that the theatre's acoustical properties were considered outstanding, and the lighting system provided an atmosphere to enhance the movies shown on the screen.

wreath decorations, a three part round arched arcade with Corinthian columns and decorative keystones. The brickwork has decorative banding and stone quoins at the corners. There is also interesting brickwork around the windows consisting of a flat arch of vertical stretchers and four headers at the corners which form squares. The arcade on the building is mirrored in the Alger Building(1928) located across the street at 35-37 King Street East).

At the rear of the building, a sign is painted on the wall advertising the theatre's parking lot. Although it is badly faded, it could be restored.

There are also a number of interior features of note. When the theatre was first built, the moving picture industry was in its infancy and the owners were concerned that the movies could be a fad. To prevent this from being a problem, the theatre was built with an extra heavy foundation to support a fly tower that still exists to accommodate props and a stage that measures 40 feet wide by 22 feet deep was installed along with an orchestra pit. The original movie screen that still exists can be electronically moved to the back of the stage when the venue called for live entertainment. The theatre also has a double basement for the installation of dressing rooms and prop storage area.

The auditorium is equipped with five decorative chandeliers. These unique fixtures resemble bowls with arms reaching up to hold candles. When the lights are down for a performance, the bowls are lit up with concealed lights that shine up to the ceiling with a bluish glow. When the lights go up, the candles are lit up. These fixtures also have the ability to be lowered electrically to facilitate maintenance and repair.

Another unique feature of the theatre is the ornate plaster detailing on the ceiling. This originally carried down into the walls and suited the layout of the auditorium. The plaster detailing consists of medallions representing mythological subjects and the ceiling conveys the feeling of a clouded night sky. The layout of the five chandeliers consists of four smaller chandeliers arranged in a circle following the curve of the building's roof around a fifth larger chandelier in the middle of the dome of the auditorium. All of the chandeliers are topped off with medallions that are linked

### Sources

Grandovec, Dan, "Report on the Regent Theatre" (personal research report), March 27, 2000.

Mason, Rose Mary, Architectural notes on the Regent Theatre, December 1999.

Oshawa Historical Society, "Historical Information Sheet-The Regent Theatre", April 28, 1998

Oshawa Times Newspaper, "Opening Recalled of Regent Theatre", December 16, 1969.

Oshawa Times Newspaper, "50 Years in City Marked by Regent", April 18, 1970.

Oshawa Times Newspaper, "Can Council Save the Regent", June 7, 1989.

Sutton Group Status Realty, "Open House Brochure", December 1991.

Thomas Buckley Collection, Article entitled "Regent Theatre Credit to City", The Oshawa Daily Reformer, June 30, 1927

**Regent Theatre**  
**48-50 King Street East**  
**Oshawa**

**Owner:** 870682 Ontario Limited  
Aeolic Inc. (Property Manager)

**Site Description**

**Construction Date:** 1919  
**Builder/Designer:** J, McNee Jeffrey  
**Architectural Style:** Georgian  
**Original Use:** Theatre  
**Present Use:** Vacant (former use was night club)

**General Description:**

**Plan:** Rectangle  
**Foundation:** Concrete  
**Exterior Wall:** Brick  
**Windows:** 1/1  
**Roof:** Domed

SOUTH FRONT ELEVATION

Late 1990s

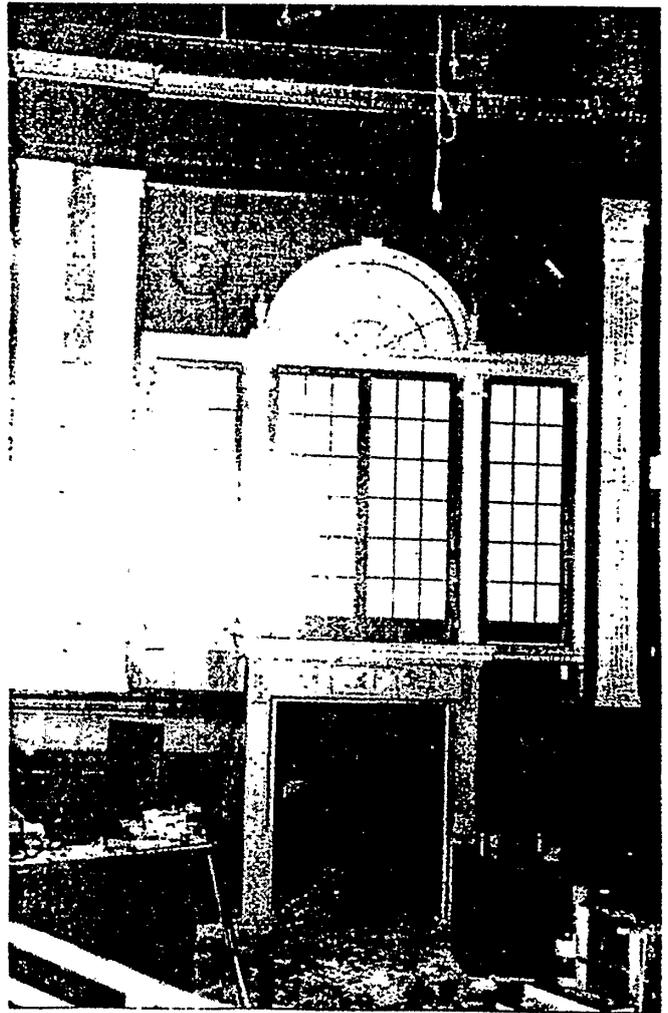
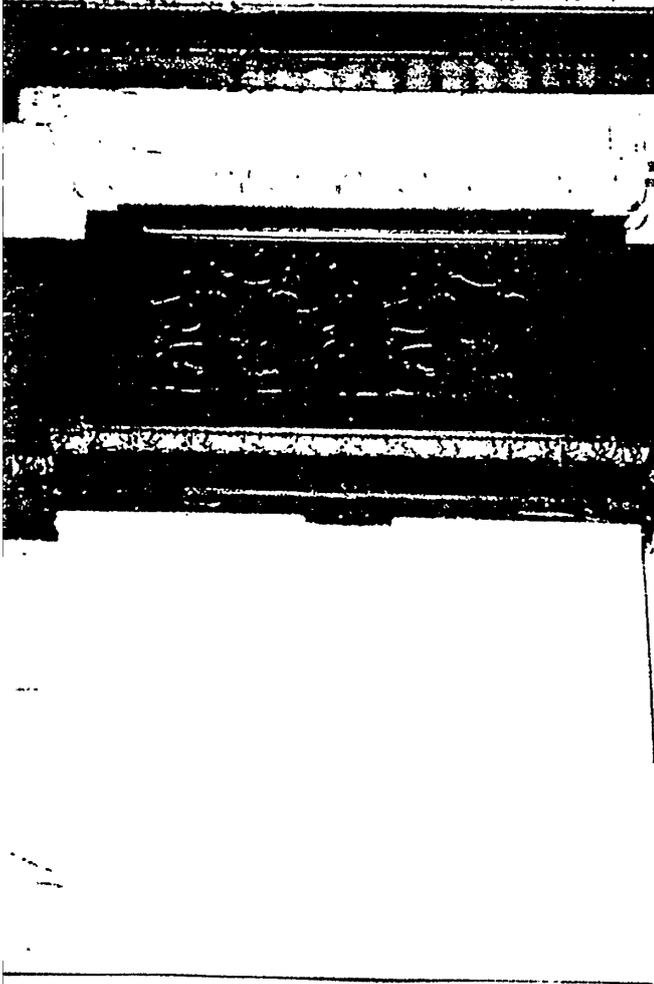
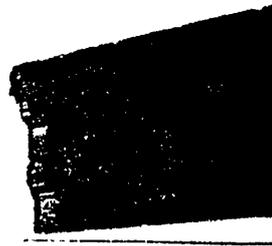


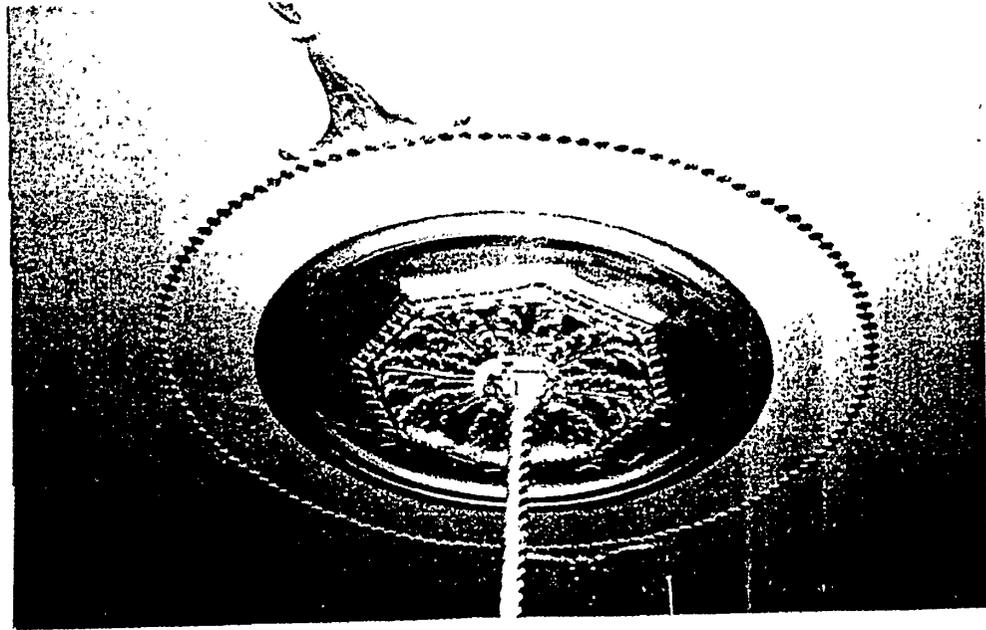
Early 1990s



INTERIOR

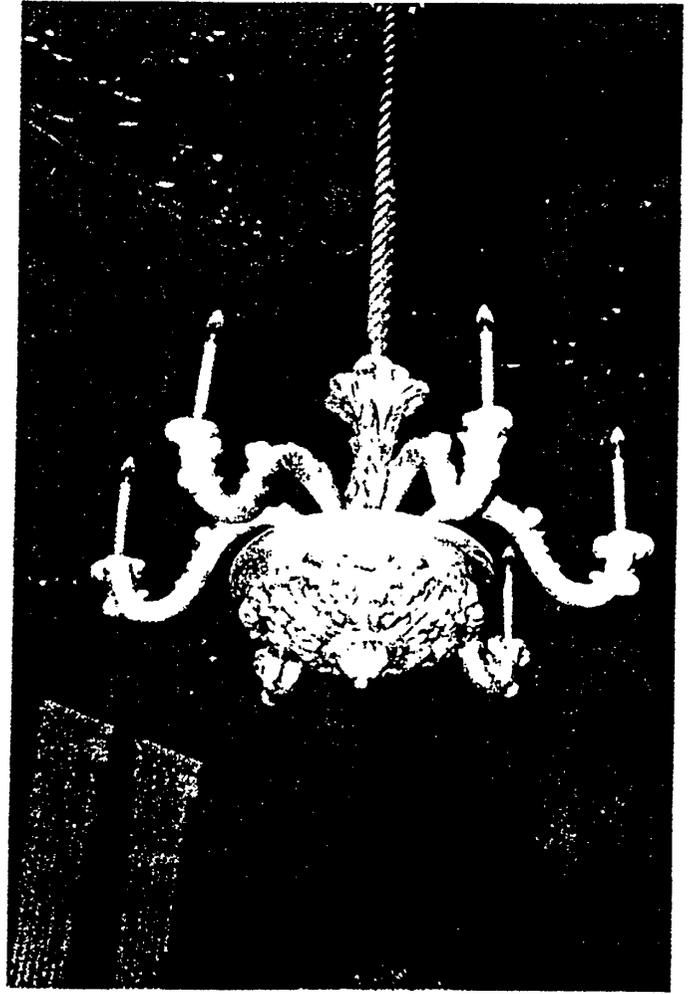
- Decorative  
Features





Interior Decorative Features

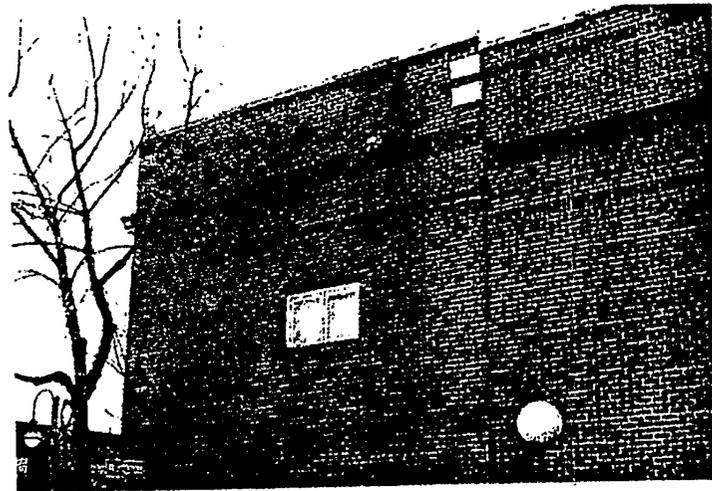
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Regent Theatre  
Oshawa.

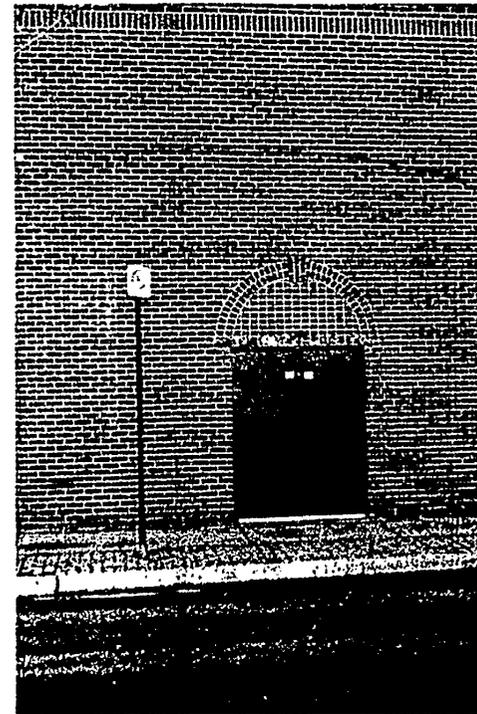
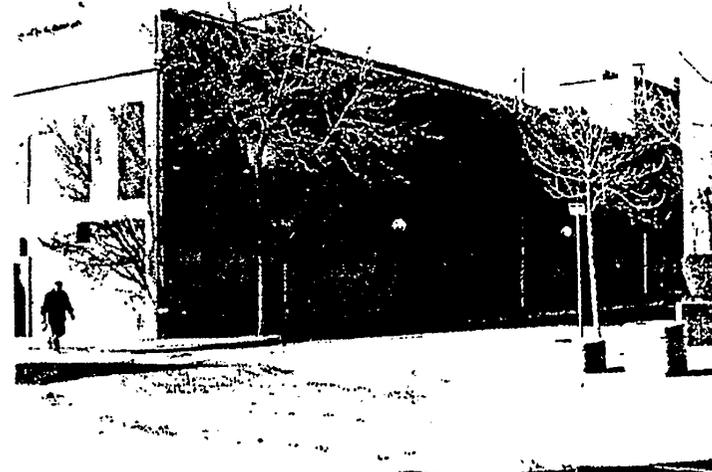


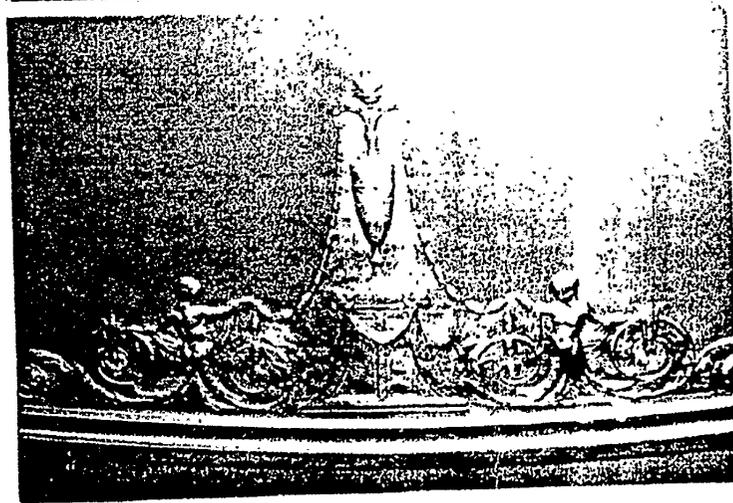
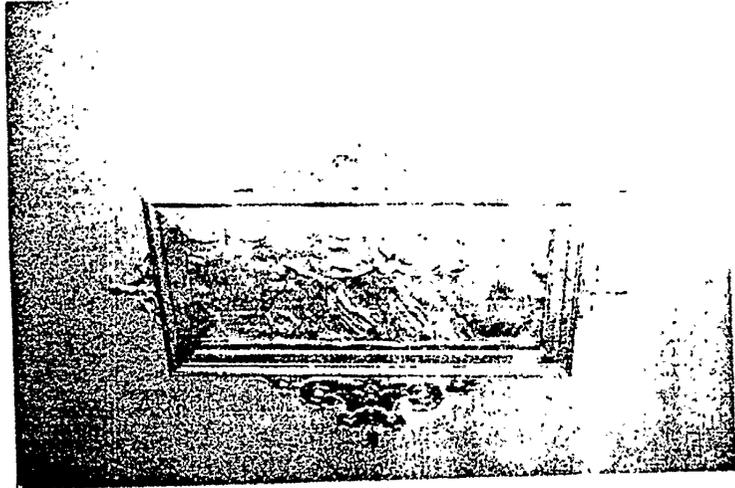
Regent Theatre, c.1920



EAST ELEVATION

- brick banding
- decorative brick treatment above door





INTERIOR  
Decorative Features

